

Message Text

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20

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 MC-02 ACDA-05 AID-05 OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00

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R 211630Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9729

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELIZE

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 0399

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, GT, BH, UK, MARR

SUBJ: ALLEGATION THAT US PLANS MILITARY BASE IN BELIZE

1. SUMMARY: PRIVATE CITIZENS' GROUP HAS CHARGED THAT US PLANS TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY BASE IN BELIZE. MINDEF TOLD PRESS HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH PLAN. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR HIS IRRITATION AT GROUP'S EFFORT TO DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN US AND GUATEMALA AND SUGGESTED EMBASSY ISSUE PUBLIC DENIAL. TO AVOID FUELING A RUMOR THAT HAS RECEIVED ONLY LIGHT MEDIA COVERAGE, WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT DONE SO. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING HIS CALL ON PRESIDENT LAUGERUD MORNING JANUARY 13, AMBASSADOR WAS GIVEN BY PRESIDENT A TRANSCRIPT OF A PORTION OF A NEWS PROGRAM CARRIED THREE HOURS EARLIER BY TWO GUATEMALA CITY RADIO STATIONS(GOG APPARENTLY MONITORS AND TRANSCRIBES ALL MAJOR NEWS PROGRAMS). THE PROGRAM REPORTED THAT UNNAMED MEMBERS OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE FOR THE RECUPERATION OF BELIZE
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(CCPRB) HAD CHARGED, IN A PRESS CONFERENCE THE

PREVIOUS EVENING, THAT (A) US PLANNED TO BUILD A MILITARY INSTALLATION IN BELIZE AS A BASE TO BE USED AGAINST CUBA, AND (B) THAT BELIZE GOVERNMENT IS SELLING LAND AT A PENNY AN ACRE TO (SIC) "YANKEE COMPANIES SHELL, GULF AND TEXACO." NEWS COMMENTATOR ENDED WITH CALL FOR "YANKEE GO HOME". PRESIDENT EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE AND SAID HE HOPED EMBASSY WOULD ISSE A STATEMENT DENYING STORIES WHICH HE SAID WERE BEING CIRCULATED BY PEOPLE TRYING TO STIR UP TROUBLE BETWEEN US AND GUATEMALA.

3. EL TIEMPO AFTERNOON JANUAYR 13 CARRIED FRONT PAGE STORY QUOTING MINGUEL ANGEL MEJICANOS NOVALES OF THE CCPRB AS SAYING, "BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAVE AGREED WITH THE UNITED STATES TO TRANSFER THE TERRITORY OF BELIZE AND CREATE THERE A MILITARY BASE FOR THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRY TO THE NORTH AND BECAUSE OF THIS THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT STRANGLING A SMALL COUNTRY." HE CLAIMED TO HAVE "RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS BEGUN TO BUY BELIZEAN LAND WITHOUT ANY LEGAL AUTHORITY. THESE LANDS ARE BEING BOUGHT BY THE LARGE AMERICAN COMPANIES GULF, TEXACO, SHELL, AND ESSO."

4. AFTERNOON LA HORA JANUARY 17 CARRIED FRONT PAGE DENIAL BY MINDEF LUCAS OF ANY KNOWLEDGE OF US PLANS TO CONSTRUCT A BASE IN BELIZE. EDITORIAL COLUMN IN LA NACION JANUARY 81 NOTED LUCAS' DENIAL BUT IMPLIED THERE STILL MIGHT BE SOME TRUTH TO THE STORY.

5. NONE OF THE LARGE MORNING OR AFTERNOON JOURNALS HAVE PICKED UP THE STORY, NOR HAS THE EMBASSY BEEN QUERIED. UNLESS SITUATION CHANGES, EMBASSY PLANS TO LET THE STORY DIE WITHOUT ANY OFFICIAL RESPONSE.
ANDRES

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